

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. An information collection apparatus which collects information via transmission lines from a plurality of information generation apparatuses, wherein each of said information generation apparatus has a generation-side information storage unit which stores the information generated due to its specific generation factor, said information collection apparatus comprising:

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a table storage unit which stores a priority definition table in which respective priorities of said plurality of information generation apparatuses are defined;

an information collection unit which refers to the priority definition table upon reception of a notice from any of said information generation apparatuses in which the amount of information stored on said generation-side information storage unit has reached a predetermined amount, and collects the information stored on the generation-side information storage unit of the relevant information generation apparatus only when the priority of the relevant information generation apparatus is higher than the preset priority; and

a collection-side information storage unit which stores the information collected by said information collection unit.

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2. The information collection apparatus according to claim
1 further comprising a substitution control unit which allows
any one or more of said information generation apparatuses to
act as a substitute to execute the operation of collecting
5 information, that is supposed to be executed by said information
collection unit, when a given error has occurred.

3. The information collection apparatus according to claim
2, wherein said substitution control unit allows an information
10 generation apparatus out of said information generation
apparatuses with the lowest priority to act as the substitute,
to execute the operation of collecting information.

4. An information collection apparatus which collects
15 information via transmission lines from a plurality of
information generation apparatuses, wherein each of said
information generation apparatus has a generation-side
information storage unit which stores the information generated
due to its specific generation factor, said information
20 collection apparatus comprising:

an information collection unit which collects
information with priorities higher than the preset priority
upon reception of a notice from any of said information
generation apparatuses in which the amount of information
25 stored on said generation-side information storage unit has

reached a predetermined amount; and

a collection-side information storage unit which stores the information collected by said information collection unit.

5 5. The information collection apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the priorities are set separately for each of said information generation apparatuses.

10 6. The information collection apparatus according to claim 4 further comprising a substitution control unit which allows any one or more of said information generation apparatuses to act as a substitute to execute the operation of collecting information, that is supposed to be executed by said information collection unit, when a given error has occurred.

15 7. The information collection apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said substitution control unit allows an information generation apparatus out of said information generation apparatuses with the lowest priority to act as the substitute,
20 to execute the operation of collecting information.

8. An information collection apparatus which collects information via transmission lines from a plurality of information generation apparatuses, wherein each of said
25 information generation apparatus has a generation-side

information storage unit which stores the information generated due to its specific generation factor, said information collection apparatus comprising:

an information collection unit which collects
5 information stored on the generation-side information storage unit of any information generation apparatus upon reception of a notice from the relevant information generation apparatus in which a given error has occurred; and

a collection-side information storage unit which stores
10 the information collected by said information collection unit.

9. The information collection apparatus according to claim 8 further comprising a substitution control unit which allows any one or more of said information generation apparatuses to
15 act as a substitute to execute the operation of collecting information, that is supposed to be executed by said information collection unit, when a given error has occurred.

10. The information collection apparatus according to claim
20 9, wherein said substitution control unit allows an information generation apparatus out of said information generation apparatuses with the lowest priority to act as the substitute, to execute the operation of collecting information.

11. An information generation apparatus which generates information to be collected by an information collection apparatus via a transmission line, said information generation apparatus comprising:

5 an information generation unit which generates information due to its specific generation factor; and

an information storage unit which stores the generated information only when the relevant information has a priority higher than the preset priority.

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12. A computer-readable recording medium where an information collecting program, with which information is collected via transmission lines from a plurality of information generation apparatuses each of which has a generation-side information storage unit that stores information generated due to its specific generation factor, is recorded, said program for making a computer execute the steps of:

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storing a priority definition table in which respective priorities of said plurality of information generation apparatuses are defined in a table storage unit;

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referring to the priority definition table upon reception of notification from any of said information generation apparatuses in which the amount of information stored on said generation-side information storage unit has reached a

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predetermined amount, and collecting the information stored on the generation-side information storage unit of the relevant information generation apparatus only when the priority of the relevant information generation apparatus is higher than the
5 preset priority; and

storing the collected information in a collection-side information storage unit.

13. A computer-readable recording medium where an
10 information generating program, with which information to be collected by the information collection apparatus via a transmission line is generated, is recorded, said program for making a computer execute the steps of:

generating information based on specific generation
15 factor; and

storing the generated information only when the relevant information has a priority higher than the preset priority.